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Turkestan and Its Textile Crafts

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Turkestan

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131 The neighbouring countries of Eastern and Western Turkestan, situated in the heart of Central Asia and separated from each other by the Tien Shan mountains, have little more in common than the name, which points to the fact that the country is peopled by Turkish tribes. Because of its extreme barrenness, which makes permanent settlement exceedingly difficult, and its commercially favourable situation between the vast territory of China and the ancient civilizations of Western Asia, Eastern Turkestan is essentially a transit country. In striking contrast to this desert land stands Western Turkestan, which has seen so many influxes of wandering tribes, so many invasions and different settlers, that it is in every respect one of the most interesting countries in the world.

161 The great differences existing between the two countries is best shown by the differences in the density of the population, which depends on the number of people which a country can feed. Western Turkestan (Russian Turkestan) has an extent of about 770,000 square miles, and is inhabited by about 9 million people. Thus the average population per square mile amounts to only 11.5, a fact which shows that large tracts of the country are uninhabitable deserts, and that on the whole it is sparsely populated. Compared with Eastern Turkestan, where only 1½ million people inhabit 386,000 square miles, it is, however, a veritable paradise. Eastern Turkestan is one of the most thinly populated countries in the world.

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A cotton transport in the streets of Samarkand. To this day caravan traffic plays an important part in Turkestan.

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pulated countries in the world. It is also known as Chinese Turkestan, and today forms part of the province of Sinkiang. The greater part of the country is a barren wilderness (see ill. page 1435). The central part, called the Takla Makan desert, is not only uninhabitable, but practically impassable. The very small quantities of water which run down into this basin at the time of the melting of the snows form the river Tarim, which runs eastward into the salty lake of Lopnor. The few oases, of which Kashgar, Jarkend, and Khotan are the most important, are all situated on the margin of this territory, along which the roads run. All commerce goes by way of caravans which require months to cover the distance from China to Kashgar.

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[Eastern Turkestan -- Analyst]

[See cat. 116, p. 5 -- Analyst]

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Sketch-map of Turkestan.

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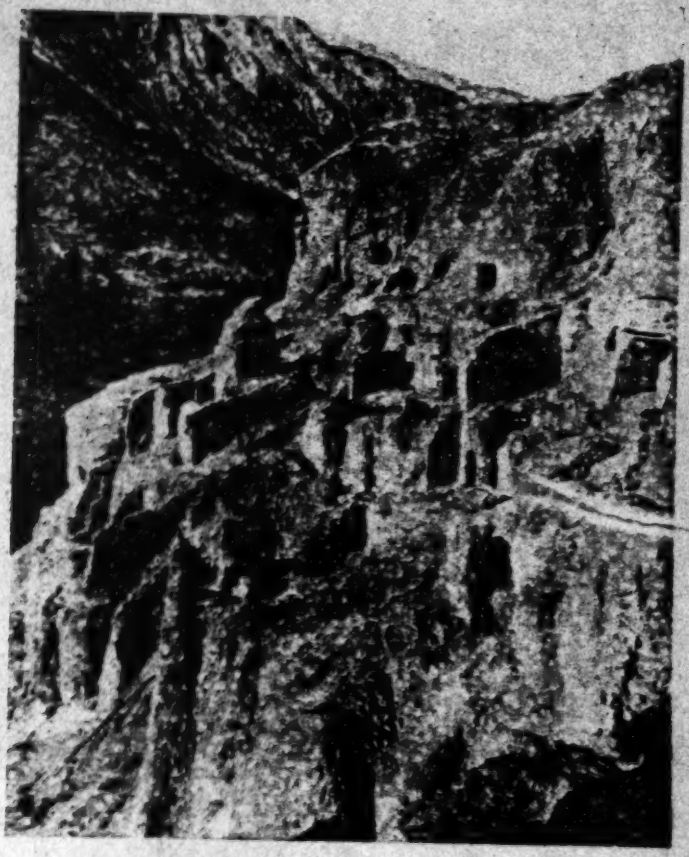
Ruins of Buddhist temples in Eastern Turkestan. Tajuk Mazar in the Oasis of Turfan.



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492 to Kashgar. Only Bactrian camels, very heavy
133 double-humped animals, whose thick coat of hair protects them against the snow-storms and the bitter cold, are strong enough to carry burdens of merchandise through this water-
[132] less and treeless country. The temperature varies between +35° centigrade in the summer and −25° in the winter.

172 It is probable that conditions were not al-
133 ways so unfavourable. The ruins of richly
487 adorned Buddhist temples and monasteries excavated by Sir Aurel Stein, Albert von Grünwedel, and Albert Le Coq, and an astonishingly large number of frescoes, sculptures, fabrics, and documents discovered by these scholars bear witness to this fact. The so-called silk-roads which passed these monasteries were

1 [In Eastern Turkestan --Analyst]

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the trade-routes between China and the West. In ancient and medieval times they were numbered among the busiest caravan-routes in the world (see Ciba Review No. 10, page 316). Silks, brocades, precious stones, Chinese porcelain, metal and glass goods of enormous value were transported by these roads. Nevertheless Marco Polo's report shows that even in his day, that is to say towards the end of the thirteenth century, the population must have been very small, and that the water-works were falling into decay. It is very probable that the Mohammedan invasion which destroyed the Buddhist civilization of Eastern Turkestan was not entirely responsible for this decline; a general change of climatic conditions must be presumed to have taken place. In Marco Polo's

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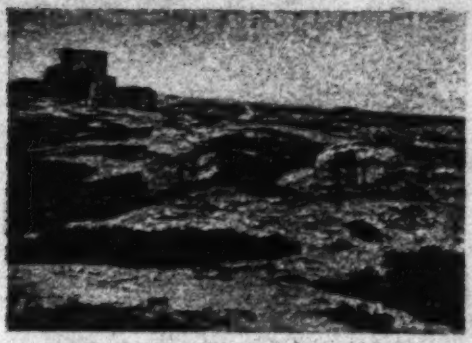

Anau in Turkmenistan. This was a flourishing town in the 13th century, but is now a ruin, since its water supply was cut off during a war.

133 time the country was so barren that it was firmly believed to be inhabited only by ghosts.

101 131 By comparison with this desert area Western Turkestan is a rich country. It has at all times been of cultural importance, and sometimes of very great importance indeed. At the present day it is divided into the four republics of Uzbegistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kasakistan, which are incorporated into Soviet Russia. The territory stretches northward to the Aral Sea, in the West it is bordered by the Caspian Sea, in the South by Persia and Afghanistan, and to the East, as already stated, it abuts on Sinkiang, the westernmost province of China. Western Turkestan, too, is a land of

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132 Western Turkestan, too, is a land of contrasts no less marked than those of Eastern Turkestan. Its climate is continental in the extreme and very dry. During the summer the temperature reaches more than 40° centigrade, and in the winter it falls to 25° below zero and even lower. Nine tenths of Western
133 Turkestan consist of barren desert. The desert of Kara Kum (Black Sand) to the South of the Aral Sea, the home of the wandering Turkoman tribes (see map on page 1434), was named the Grave of the Caravans, and Kizil Kum (Red Sand), the desert situated North of Kara Kum, gives but meagre sustenance to the nomad Kirghiz tribes and their herds.

All the more fertile by contrast are the oases of Western Turkestan. The district is watered by no fewer than six large rivers, among which are the two historically important streams of Amu Darya and Sir Darya, known to the ancients as Oxus and Jaxartes. The valley of the upper Sir Darya is named Ferghana, a fertile area surrounded by mountains, which in the course of history has been coveted and conquered by many peoples, chiefly for the sake of its famous horses. In more recent times it has become known as one of the principal cotton and silk producing countries (see ill. page 1438).

More than once within human recollection the Amu Darya has changed its course; three hundred years ago it sent at least one arm into

1 [See cat 116, p 4 -- Analyst]
2 [See cat 116, pp 13, 16 -- Analyst]

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An "arik" or irrigation ditch in the orchard zone round Samarkand. Large parts of Turkestan can only be kept fertile by artificial irrigation.

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Bokhara ruler of the 16th century cutting a melon. The features show a pronounced Turkic-Mongol cast. Contemporary miniature.

133 the Caspian Sea, and it is possible that at one time the entire river ran into that sea. Therefore, we find in the middle of the Kara Kum desert the ruins of large medieval towns marking the course which the water at one time took. At the present day both the Amu Darya and the Sir Darya run into the Aral Sea.

312 The four other rivers have no outlet, and would disappear in the desert, were it not for the fact that a system of irrigation which has been developed over a period of thousands of years serves to turn their waters to useful account. By means of this system the water is conducted through a net-work of canals which finally become mere ditches (ariks); thus it finds its way all over the country into every field, cotton-plantation, and orchard (see ill. page 1436). The distribution of the water is so well regulated that every peasant in Western Turkestan knows exactly on what day he can water his fields. Among these four rivers there are two particularly important ones, the Serafshan, the waters of which fill the ariks and mosque-ponds of Bokhara and Samarkand, and the Murghab, on which the prosperity of the oasis of Merv depends. In war-time the first thing to be destroyed was invariably the canal-system. The ancient city of Merv, at one

312 time one of the most flourishing towns of the Orient, and many other similar settlements have thus become deserted ruins, covered with thorny bushes and saksaul (salt
245 shrubs). The irrigated districts on the contrary are exceedingly fertile; they produce cotton and fruit rather than grain. Apricots grow in such abundance that only a small portion of the harvest can be eaten or dried for the winter; pomegranates, figs, and grapes are to be had in large quantities. No country produces more or better varieties of peaches, and melons are grown even in districts which are
484 practically deserts. Traffic by caravan (see ill. page 1434) has reached a very high standard of development.

[361] The municipal civilization which has grown up in these oases is of great antiquity, as is shown by the Zend Avesta, the sacred book of the ancient Persians. Merv and other important towns have perished in the course of the centuries, others, like Samarkand, continue to flourish to this day. The libraries and theo-

532 *Timur (Tamerlane, 1370–1405) in front of his tent surrounded by courtiers. Miniature in one of the oldest illustrated biographies of Tamerlane. 1467. Privately owned, Brooklyn.*

[p. 3 -- Analyst]

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Cotton bazaar in Andizhan (Ferghana). The cotton is offered for sale by veiled peasant women.

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175 logical schools of Turkestan in its early Islamic period were famous throughout Asia. The physician Ibn Sina (980–1037), better known under the name of Avicenna, worked at Bokhara, and the famous geographer Jakut (1179–1229) took three years to exploit the works of the ten great libraries of Merv for his geographical studies. Early descriptions of the bazaars of Samarkand, such as that given

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175 by Gonzales del Clavijo, who in 1403 travelled to the court of Timur (1370–1405) as an ambassador of Spain, confirmed the fact that it was a centre of international commerce, where the goods of all the countries of Asia, even those of the remotest, were to be found. Silks of Turkestan and horses from Ferghana were important articles of export, and reports on the arts at the court of the Indian Mogul em-

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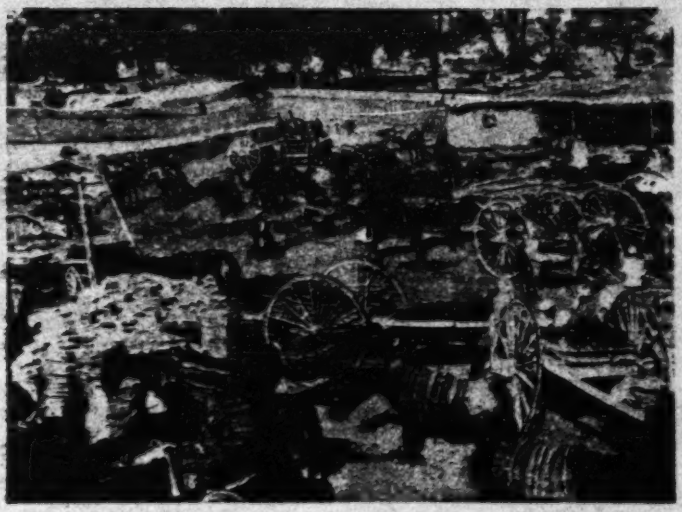

Interior view of a caravanserai in Samarkand. In the foreground some of the high two-wheeled carts which are the most important vehicles of transport in Western Turkestan.

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175 perors speak of paper from Samarkand as the best in the world for artistic purposes and for calligraphy. The blue-glazed domes and mos-
361 ques of Samarkand with their glittering fayence tiles (see ill. adjoining) are unsurpassed anywhere in the world. To this day the town has remained an important centre of culture. In modern times Andishan, Khokand, and Khojent, as centres of the cotton-trade (see ill. page 1458) became not only wealthy towns, but places of extravagant luxury in the European sense of the word. Bokhara, the object of many wars in the course of its history, was from the middle of the eighteenth century onward the residence of the Emirs of Bokhara; Tashkent and Askhabad were the seats of the Russian administration, in these towns the Russian quarters surpassed the Mohammedan
[439] in size and importance. At the present time the country's commerce with India and China
[77] is practically at a standstill, so that prosperity has greatly declined. Though Western civilization has made progress, modernization has not come up to expectations, a fact scarcely surprising in view of the extreme conservatism prevailing among the Islamic population of Central Asia.

184 The checkered history of Turkestan led to
619 the development of a great number of different tribes that are found both in town and country and whose manifold ethnological differences

1 [See cat 116, p 18--Analyst]

2 [See cat 116 p 18--Analyst]

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The dome of the Mosque of Shir Dar in Samarkand. Built in 1616.

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find expression in habits and customs, dress and textiles. This is particularly the case where Western Turkestan is concerned (see ill. page 145). The richness of the country attracted many invaders, all of whom have left their mark on the country and its population. In an-

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[See cat. 116, p. 52--Analyst]

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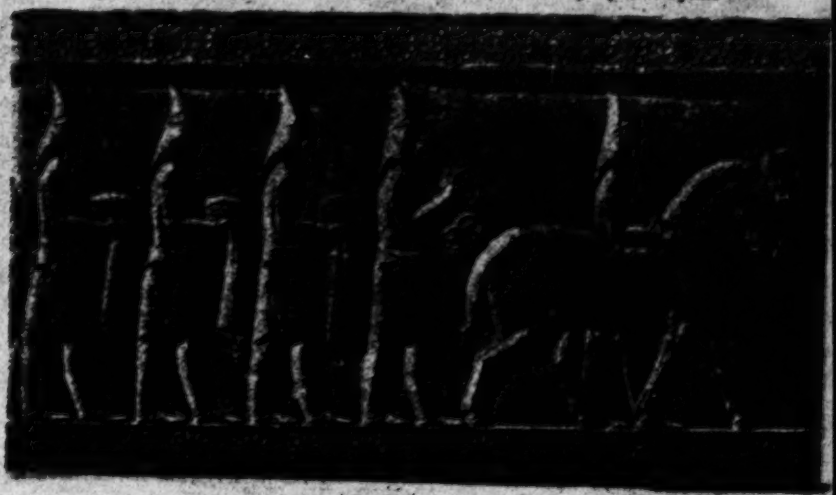
Men of Turkestan paying tribute to the King of Persia. After an ancient Persian frieze at Persepolis.



4:Leix U-5 (no date)1941 Rl.1 Turkestan Rl.1

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Tamerlane's tomb at Samarkand.

175 cient times it was the northermost part of Persia, closely united to that country by ties of religion and culture. Its inhabitants, even those of the extreme northern districts in the neighbourhood of the Aral Sea are frequently depicted on sculptures of the tombs of Persian kings, and are seen among the tribute bearers on the friezes of Persepolis (see ill. page 1439). They are shown wearing caps that cover the entire head with the exception of the face; these caps are not unlike those worn by some Kirghiz tribes as a protection against sand and snow-storms. The figures depicted as subjects of Persia may have belonged to a nation which spoke one of the Indo-Germanic languages, and it is assumed that Turkestan was originally peopled by one of the many Indo-Germanic races. However that may be, large-scale migrations of tribes, the effects of which were felt throughout Asia and sometimes even in Europe, swept over the country, and changed the character of the population. In 329 B.C. Alexander the Great conquered Turkestan,

* [See cat. 116, p. 19 --Analyst]

195 and for a time took up residence at Samarkand. At a later period it became the subject of conflict between Persia and the Chinese. The ethnological fate of Turkestan was, however, finally decided by the Turks. It formed the Western part of the Great Empire which the Turks founded in the centre of Asia in the sixth century, and in the following period other Turkish tribes pressed after those who [162] had preceded them. To this day they form the major portion of the population of Eastern and Western Turkestan beside which the other components are comparatively insignificant. Even the conquest of the country by Islam, so decisive an event in the history of the peoples of other countries, such as North Africa, Sicily, and Spain, was in Turkestan of almost exclusively religious significance. Turkish predominance in Central Asia was in no way shaken by this new movement, the originators and pioneers of which were Arabs. On the contrary it was the Turks who after their conversion assumed the leadership in the Islamic world of Asia. They founded powerful dynasties in Afghanistan, India, and even in Egypt; Turkestan itself, geographically the extreme outpost of the Mohammedan world, was in political respects very often its centre. That was particularly the case under Timur (Tamerlane) (see ill. page 1437) who brought artists and craftsmen from all his conquering raids to Samarkand, which he made a city of marvels, far surpassing in its magnificence any other town within the world of Islam (see ill. on this page). Its superb buildings are entirely covered with coloured glaze that reflects the brilliant sun, producing an effect of beauty which would almost seem beyond anything in the nature of mere brick and stone. The tradition of this art outlived Timur's feeble successors; later Turkestan rulers like the Emirs of Bokhara continued to support the arts, though their standard had by then perceptibly declined. In ethnographic respects too, the inhabitants have changed but little, and the country has remained the centre of the Turkish world in Inner Asia.

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7/1 [See p. 12--Analyst]

7/1 [See cat. 116, p. 20--Analyst]

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000 **Costumes of the Settled Population of Turkestan** *By A. Leix*

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Costumes of the Settled Population of Turkestan

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The wealthier portion of the population of Turkestan, the merchants, tradesmen, artisans, and peasants, live in the towns and the villages of the fertile areas. They differ considerably in culture, dress, and customs from the nomads who range the deserts. It is usual to distinguish between three different domiciled groups, the Tajiks, Uzbegs, and the Sarts.

Of these three groups the Tajiks are the most interesting. They number about 1,200,000, and live in the southern part of the former emirate of Bokhara, which now forms an autonomous republic within the Soviet Union under the name of Tajikistan. They are above all a mountain people, and are at the same time skilled agriculturists. As their language has preserved Iranian elements, it may be assumed that they are a remnant of the original population of the country, which retreated before the invasion of the Turks.

The Uzbegs, about two-million souls, form the majority of the agricultural population. They live in the heart of the fertile areas round about Samarkand, Bokhara, and Khiva. They appear to have originated in an army formed by Uzbeg Khan in the 14th century, which was made up of men who were willing to renounce the shamanistic customs which persisted and still persist throughout the country,

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View of the courtyards of Mohammedan houses in Samarkand. In the background the ruins of the great mosque built by Timur between 1398–1403.

162 619 184 and to profess a pure form of Islam. For that reason the Uzbegs contain all the elements of the Turkestan population, Arab, Turkish, and Tajik.

The two million Sarts who in the main make up the municipal population of Western Turkestan are even more of a racial mixture than the Uzbegs. That is not surprising considering the fact that the cities of Turkestan have always been great trading centres of international character. Nowadays, the differ-

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The head of a wedding procession in Bukhara. Boys and workmen in typical dress.

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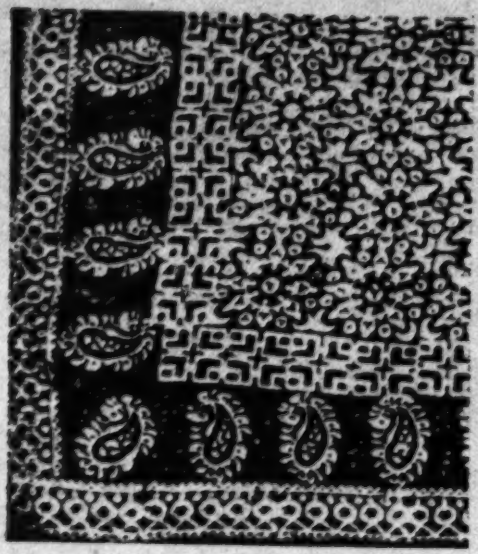

Part of a waist-cloth of Bokhara. In addition to other motives the cashmere palmette is seen. Printed silk fabric.

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ence between Sarts and Uzbegs may be regarded as obliterated. Fifteen years ago the name Sart was officially given up; since then the people who formerly bore that name have been known as Uzbegs, and the most important republic in Western Turkestan is called Uzbegistan.

In Eastern Turkestan these three peoples are represented by a few merchants only, parti-

162 619 184 cularly in Kashgar, the first town on the other side of the border. The domiciled population there is made up of the so-called Turki people, more or less pure-blooded East Turks, who also profess the Mohammedan faith. As both Turkestans are provinces of countries of different race, the influence of ethnologically unrelated foreigners is strong: Russian influence in Western Turkestan and that of the Chinese in Eastern Turkestan. These foreigners hold the more important government positions, and also engage in commerce, particularly in the export trade.

342 The houses of the people of Turkestan show the same character everywhere. They are cubic structures, built of sun-dried brick round open courts, and shut off from the street (see ill. page 1441).[1]

291 The dress of the groups mentioned above is also essentially similar. In all Islamic countries dress is governed by the same law, so that the same elements and even the same fabrics are found again and again. Needless to say, the profession of the wearer and his financial status result in differences, particularly in the quality and embellishment of the material. The various districts also show certain peculiarities of dress which make it possible to determine the part of the country from which the wearer comes. In all these cases, however, the differences are no more than variations of the same elementary forms.

The leg-wear of the men consists of white

1 [See cat. 116, p 24.--Analyst]
2 [Tajiks, Uzbegs, Sarts--Analyst]

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Men of Bokhara in a tea-house, wearing chalat and turbans.

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Chalat of Bokhara with striped pattern.

cotton trousers (see ill. page 1441), the material of which is rather coarsely woven, and is neither bleached nor dyed. The name given to this material is "bes". The trousers are secured by an attractively worked band, which is drawn through the upper seam, and tied round the waist. The upper part of the body is covered with a blouse cut in the manner of a shirt. It is also of cotton, and is girded round the waist with a diagonally folded square of [294] cloth. This cloth is often prettily embroidered or decorated with regular ornaments in the block-printing style (see ill. page 1442). Before beginning his devotions the wearer unties it, and spreads it out before him, thus making it serve as a prayer-mat. These garments form the customary dress of the labourers, artisans, and of the poorer classes generally. Merchants, priests, and all men of wealth and rank wear as an additional item of dress the chalat, which is also put on by poorer people on festive occasions (see ill. page 1442).

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The word "chalat" signifies a rich garment of honour of the kind traditionally bestowed by Oriental princes as a badge of distinction. Hermann Vámbéry, who in the second half of the nineteenth century travelled in Central Asia under the disguise of a dervish, reports that in Khiva he met a high official sorting chalats which were intended as rewards for soldiers, and the value of which was graded according to the number of enemies' heads

[See p 25 -- Analyst]
[See Cat. 114, p 28 -- Analyst]

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291 which each man had brought home from the war. The chalat as the usual outer garment is [554] known in the vernacular as "chapan". It is cut like an overcoat, reaches to the ankles, and has very long sleeves, into which the wearer [834] can withdraw his hands in order to comply with the Mohammedan law that no part of the body should be uncovered (see ill. below).

It is the chalat which gives the crowds in the cities of Turkestan their colourful appearance. When on the great Mohammedan feast-days the crowds of the faithful in their many-coloured chalats stand in front of the glittering mosques, when they kneel or throw themselves on the ground to pray, the scene is one which can probably be parallelled nowhere in 291 Europe or in the East. The patterns and colours of the chalats are of an extraordinary 294 variety, and their edges are trimmed with narrow borders of embroidered or woven material from which small tassels are suspended at regular intervals. Though the materials of the costly gold-brocaded garments worn by the very rich and the cheap printed cottons common to the poorest classes were of Russian manufacture, the greater part of the chalat fabrics were and still are characteristic products of the weavers and dyers of Turkestan. These fabrics are gaily striped, pattern-

Men of Bokhara in striped chalats and white turbans.

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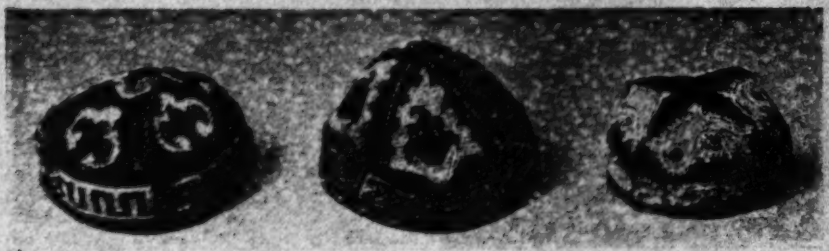

Typical caps or tibeteikas of Turkestan. Left: Tibeteikas from the region of Bokhara worked in coloured embroidery. Right: A tibeteika or cap of Ferghana decorated with four white palmettes.

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ed with large spots, or delicately flamed (see ill. page 1448). The material usually consists of a mixture of silk and cotton fibres. These beautiful, heavy, and very characteristic textiles owe their origin to Islamic religious laws. The wearing of garments made of pure silk is forbidden to the Mohammedan, no less than the use of pure gold and silver. Just as the latter decree led to the production of pottery of unsurpassable quality and beauty, the edict against the wearing of silk resulted in the manufacture of the mixed fabric known as "mesru" (= permitted), which satisfied the desire for luxury, and could at the same time

Women of Turkestan wearing long cloaks and veils.

*[See cat. 116, p. 45--Analyst]

291 be worn without infringing the Mohammedan laws.

The headgear of the townspeople in Turkestan as in other Mohammedan countries consists of a cap round which the turban-cloth is wound. The cap, usually known as "tibeteika" in Turkestan, is small and round, and covers only the crown of the head, which is shaven completely, with the exception of one
291 strand of hair. The decoration of the tibeteika varies with the district. In Bokhara it is worked
294 in coloured emboidery (see ill. above), in Tashkent it is black and decorated with coloured embroidery, in Ferghana it is also black, but is adorned with four white leaves (see ill. above). In the mountain districts the tibeteikas are also worked in coloured embroidery by the women. More frequently than in other Islamic countries the cap is worn in Turkestan without a turban. This is invariably the case when the wearer is working. The ordinary cotton turban-cloth is about ten or twelve feet long and roughly eight inches wide. It is of one colour, very often pale red. This cloth can be wound round the head four times. The end which hangs down over the neck is usually decorated with woven stripes.
291 Costly turban-cloths of thin material are generally longer, and are arranged in a more intricate manner. The wearer literally winds himself into the cloth, which is held by another man who twists it constantly. The name for these turbans is "chihil petch" which means forty, that is to say innumerable, windings.

The footwear commonly worn consists of a pair of light top-boots over which slipper-like shoes are worn which can easily be taken off when entering a house, as is demanded by custom. In the place of these slippers it has long been customary to wear rubber overshoes of Russian manufacture.

7 [see cat. 116, p. 31 - Analyst]

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The Uzbeg woman is beyond doubt more closely veiled than anyone else in the Orient. When she goes out (see ill. page 1444) she wears a heavy cloak (faranji) which in Samarkand and in the Ferghana district is usually of blue material; in Bokhara the colours are sometimes brighter, for instance yellow and green. This cloak is drawn over the head, and hangs down to the ground in straight heavy folds. The long narrow sleeves are never used, but are allowed to hang down the wearer's back (see ill. adjoining). In the majority of cases they could not be used even if it were desired, being more like long narrow ribbons than sleeves; they are only retained because tradition demands it. In addition to this veiling of her figure, the Uzbeg woman does not even reveal a shadowy outline of her face. The narrow opening left by the cloak is covered with a close veil of black horse-hair (chashpent). If a woman carries a baby in her arms, which is frequently the case, it is also completely covered by the cloak. Thus the woman of Turkestan is completely enveloped in a tent of cloth; in this respect she differs very considerably from the lightly veiled Mohammedan women of Egypt. One of the first measures taken by the Soviet government in Turkestan was to forbid this method of veiling. However, this decree met with the stubborn resistance of the strictly orthodox Islamic population of Central Asia, a resistance offered both by men and women. As a result, the authorities were unable to enforce the decree even in Tashkent itself, the seat of the government.

[See col. 116 p. 32 -- Analyst]

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Women of Turkestan wearing veils and long robes, seen from behind. The woman on the right is carrying a burden on her head.

ment. In Eastern Turkestan by contrast, the veil worn by women is no more than a thin cloth drawn over the head.

Under the cloak and when indoors, the women wear a shirtlike garment over wide

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The cotton harvest in the district of Ferghana.

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A fuller of Tashkent. The heavy wedge-like head of the mallet and the way in which the handle is mounted serve to increase its effect. Sepia drawing.

291 trousers. Unlike the corresponding garment in other Mohammedan countries, this smock reaches to the ground, thus also completely enveloping the wearer's body. Members of the wealthier classes frequently wear smocks made of silk, as this material is only forbidden to the men. The patterns are much the same as those

291 of the chalats. By way of headgear the women frequently wear a round flat cap. Very young girls usually go unveiled; they wear a tibeteika very much like that of the man. The manner of dressing their hair is very attractive. It is worn in innumerable plaits into which black ribbons are worked, from the ends of which small silver bells are suspended.

[302]

As in all other Islamic countries only the women of the towns strictly observe the custom of veiling. When working in the fields the peasant-woman wears neither long cloak nor veil. When she goes to town, however, to sell her cotton at the market, she dons cloak and veil.

286 Throughout the centuries of Turkestan's history the textile crafts have maintained a considerable standard. That is natural enough as the country produces all the more important textile fibres itself. Wool was indeed used but little in the manufacture of clothing, sheep being mainly bred for slaughter, as well as for the sake of their skin, which is known as "karakul". The best kind, the skin of unborn lambs, fetches a very high price, particularly in certain colours. Silk and cotton growing have always been of great importance in Turkestan, and flourish to this day (see ill. page 1445).[1] The two principal kinds of cotton grown are Gossypium herbaceum and Gossypium hirsutum. In 1910 over 410,000 tons of cotton were grown on an area of about 940,000 acres. Silk growing was entirely in the hands of women. Its yields were always considerable, though no statistics are available.

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[1] [See cat 116, p 36 -- Analyst]

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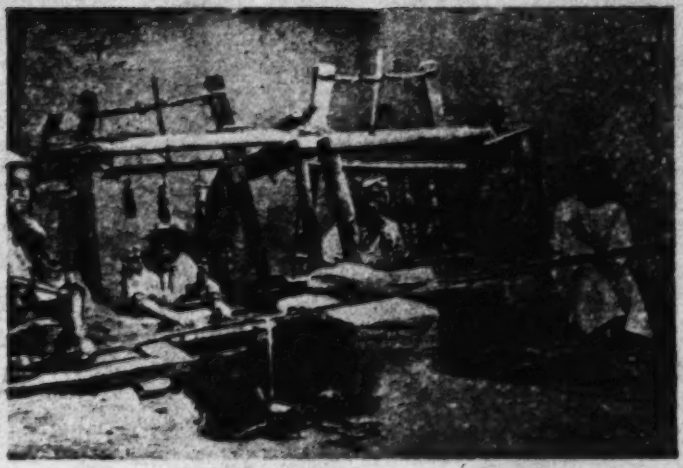

Weaver's workshop in Turkestan. The weaver is passing the shuttle through the shed which is formed on the farther side of the batten.

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statistics are available. The best silk came on to the market in Bokhara and the towns of Ferghana; Khokand and Khojent were the main trading centres for both silk and cotton. Another important cotton market was Andishan. At the present day the breeding of silkworms and to an even greater extent the growing of cotton in Western Turkestan are promoted by the government in every possible way.

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In Turkestan fabrics are woven in narrow pieces only about twenty inches wide; these are then sewn together to make garments. The type of loom generally used in Western Turkestan (see ill. page 1446)* consists of a frame of four roughly hewn poles driven vertically into the ground. It is maintained in a state of equal tension by means of a rope fixed tightly above it. Breast-beam and warp-beam are slung in rollers at so short a distance from each other that very little of the fabric is visible. Unlike the weavers of other districts the craftsman of Turkestan passes the shuttle through the rear shed at the other side of the batten. In order to impart lustre, smoothness, and thickness to the fabric it is beaten on a wooden block with a heavy mallet (see ill. page 1446).† The rhythmical beats of the fuller's mallet are heard everywhere in the bazaars of Turkestan. The mallet used for fulling is shaped like a blunt wooden wedge. It has a short handle which is not fixed to the centre of the head, but close to the narrower striking surface. This increases the efficacy of the instrument, but it requires great strength to wield it.

* [See p 39-- Analyst]

† [See p 39--Analyst]

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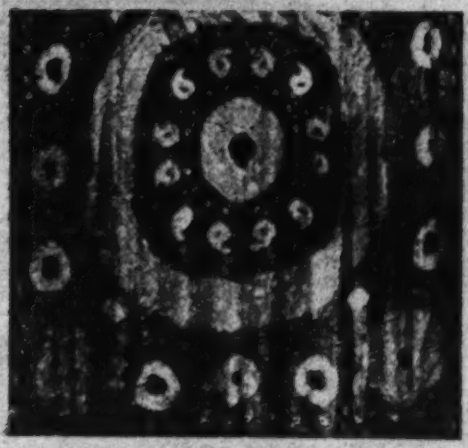

Part of a patterned chalat of Turkestan. The patterns are produced by winding threads tightly round parts of the fabric before dyeing it.

In Eastern Turkestan the ethnologist and archaeologist Albert Le Coq found a much more primitive weaver's craft than in the western region. In the manner common in India the weaver sits in a pit across which the warp-threads are stretched horizontally. Le Coq also observed board-weaving, which is practised also in Western Turkestan in the making of tape-like fabrics (see ill. below). This technique was familiar to the Ancient Egyptians; as practised in Turkestan it is, however, simpler. The boards or cards which are used to form the shed are square, and have a hole in each corner, through which the thread is

4: Leix U-5 (no date) 1961 RL1 Turkestan RL1

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Board-weaving in Eastern Turkestan. Unlike the corresponding instruments used in Ancient Egypt, the boards or cards through which the weft is passed have only four corners. After La Coq.

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286 passed. As the richness of the pattern depends on the combinations which result from turning the cards, the patterns or fabrics made in Turkestan show much less variety than those of Ancient Egypt.

286 294 From the earliest times dyeing in Turkestan has not only been a craft, but a highly developed art. In that country, as everywhere in Asia, patterns and ornaments are to a large extent produced by dyeing rather than by weaving. It must, however, be said, that in Turkestan the dyer's art never reached the same high standard of excellence that is found in India or Indonesia.

The simplest technique is that adopted in dyeing textiles blue for women's clothes. For this purpose indigo is used. The material is tightly rolled into bundles, and at certain intervals is wound round with the threads which prevent the dye from penetrating the fibre in these places. It is a matter of course that the patterns produced by this technique are comparatively simple. The ornaments consist of large circles, stripes, and spots. In addition to blue a very delicate red and also yellow are popular colours (see ill. page 1447).[1] In the streets of towns and villages in Turkestan one often sees such bundles of cloth, usually "mesru" and silk, hung up between two trees to dry. More complicated patterns, which are made up of small individual elements and which make the fabric appear "flamed", are dyed according to the ikat-method. As far as is known only the warp-ikat technique is employed. The ikat patterns of Turkestan are geometrical, and even the more complicated

1 [Cat. 116, p. 41 --Analyst]

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Man from Bokhara wearing a chalat made according to the ikat technique. The threads are dyed before weaving.

286 ones which are made in Ferghana (see ill.
294 below) and the neighbouring districts of Eastern Turkestan are not nearly so rich and so vivid as Indian and Indonesian ikat patterns.
386 With the exception of indigo, which was imported from India, all the dyestuffs used in

4: Leix U-5 (no date) 1941 Rl.1 Turkestan Rl.1

Chalat pattern from the Ferghana district produced by the ikat method.

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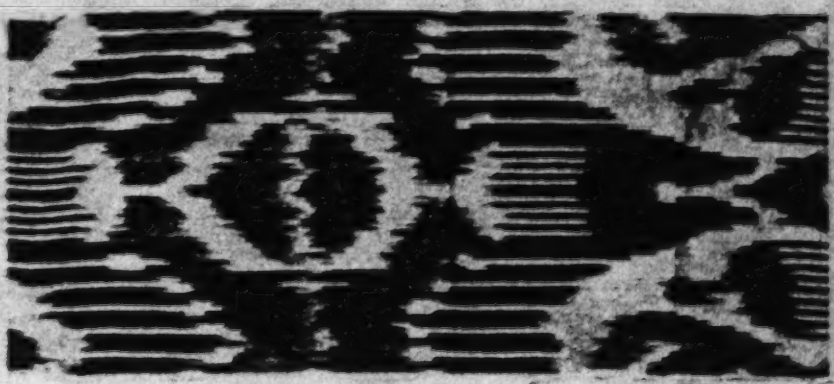

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386 Turkestan were of native origin. Madder (Rubia tinctorum) grew wild, and was also cultivated. The plants on which the kermes shield-louse feeds (see Ciba Review No. 7, page 206) also grow in many parts of the country as well as in neighbouring Persia. In the steppes the flowers of "esparuk" (Delphinium sulphureum), the infusion of which yields a strong yellow of sulphur shade, were gathered in large quantities. Another yellow dye was extracted from the blossoms of Sophora japonica (known to the natives as "tukmak"). Safflor (Carthamus tinctorius), "maksar" in the vernacular, a third plant for yellow dyes, also

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382 grows in Turkestan. Green was produced by mixing indigo with a yellow.

These dyes were the most important ones, being used almost exclusively in the dyeing of dress materials, and the people of Turkestan were fully aware of their economic significance for the textile crafts. It is, therefore, not impossible that the Khan of Khokand forbade imports of artificial dyestuffs because his revenues were directly or indirectly bound up with the production of native dyestuffs, a fact which gave him reason to fear that the introduction of the new dyes would bring about a decrease of his income.

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The Nomads of Turkestan and their Dress

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The Nomads of Turkestan and their Dress

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The picture presented by Turkestan and its peoples is very varied indeed; deserts, fertile country, and towns are areas clearly distinct from each other, each of which imposes different modes of life on its inhabitants. Such distinctions are found all over the world; they may be observed in Egypt, Arabia, and elsewhere. In Turkestan, however, they are the more striking as the inhabitants of these zones not only represent different stages of cultural advancement, but separate peoples and tribes, which differ markedly from each other in appearance, customs, and dress. Even nomad tribes, whose mode of life is essentially similar, have distinctive characteristics which vary with the nature of the districts which they range.

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In Western Turkestan there are two principal nomad tribes, the Kirghiz and the Turkomans. The Kirghiz are made up of two main groups, the Kirghiz Kasaks and the Kara Kirghiz. The Kirghiz Kasaks are by far the more numerous of the two tribes; they number about 1,600,000 souls, and form four groups (orda, hord). They roam through the Kizil Kum Desert in Western Turkestan between Tashkent and Khiva; they are scattered over a wide area, and have even encroached on the lands of the Turkoman tribes. Isolated groups are found all over the country. The majority of the Kirghiz Kasaks wander through the so-called Kirghiz Steppes which extend north-

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ward from the border of Turkestan almost to the Volga. The Kara Kirghiz, who number about 540,000 in all, are native to Turkestan. Most of them live on the inclement slopes of the Tien Shan Mountains.

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The differences in the character of these two Kirghiz tribes find expression in many details. The itinerant minstrels who wander from camp to camp of the Kara Kirghiz recite for the most part epic poems of heroic character, in which the glorious past and the great men of bygone days are praised. On the other hand the poetry of the Kirghiz Kasaks, who range the wide plains, consists mainly of romantic lays and love songs.

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In spite of these differences both are hardy nomad peoples, insensible to heat and cold, hunger and thirst. They have retained the Turco-Mongol type comparatively purely, and are of sturdy build. Their obliquely set eyes, high cheek-bones, and sparse growth of beard proclaim them as genuine Mongols. The well-known Mongolian spot (a blue blotch on the skin of the lower part of the back) has been observed in their children up to the age of two years.

The Turkomans number about 700,000 in all, they roam the western part of the country between the Persian frontier and the Aral Sea. The finest types are found among the Tekke Turkomans, a group comprising

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A road in Ferghana beside which a Kirghiz family has pitched its tents.

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Different types on a highroad of Turkestan. Between men of various races wearing the chalat and a turban or a tibetaika, women with black veils of horse-hair and a Kirghiz in a white felt hat are seen.

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162 619 about 3,000 tents, and having its centre in the oasis of Merv. To the South of them the Salors and Saryks extend their wanderings into Afghan territory, whilst the Yomuds, the northermost of the Turkoman tribes, who number about 4,800 tents, live in the vicinity of Khiva. Anyone who has ever taken refuge in a Turkoman tent during the heat of the day knows how hospitable, frank, and trustworthy the people are. They are of a decidedly warlike character. Until after the middle of the nineteenth century, when the Russians put a stop to their activities, they were the most redoubtable caravan robbers in all Turkestan, and had, moreover, a pronounced bent towards kidnapping and the slave trade. They extended their raids far into Persia, seizing what prisoners they could. The wealthier of these were released after the extortion of as large a ransom as possible, the remainder being sold into slavery. The extent of this traffic may be gathered from the fact that when the Russians conquered Khiva in 1864 they freed 40,000 slaves who had been seized by the Turkomans and sold there.

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144 The Turkomans are a tall, well-built, and vigorous race with an abundant growth of beard, large eyes, and brown, not yellow, skin. The women, too, are tall and slender; they are among the most beautiful in Asia. The tribe is much farther removed from the Mongol type than are the Kirghiz. The reason for this may be that the Turkomans live so close to the Iranian frontier, and that they have for centuries been in close contact with Iranian Tribes.

000 have for centuries been in close contact with Iranian tribes.

361 Between the customs and mode of life of these two peoples there are many interesting distinctions. To neither of them does the soil afford the conditions necessary for permanent settlement. Wherever there is a well or a water-hole which provides the moisture necessary to vegetation, they pitch their tents at will, and allow their herds to graze. When the pastures are exhausted, the camp is transferred to a favourable spot elsewhere, and the [241] same process is repeated. Where the soil is suitable, the nomads of Turkestan grow grain and other food-plants, without, however, becoming permanently settled. Only in the oases have the Turkomans abandoned the nomad form of life, and have become domiciled.

231 The two nomad peoples of Turkestan, the Turkomans and the Kirghiz, breed livestock — horses for riding, sheep for food and for their skins, and camels as beasts of burden. In addition to the horse the Turkomans also breed donkeys for riding. The different domestic animals kept by the two tribes explains another characteristic distinction between 234 their otherwise very similar habits. Both are skilled in the preparation of a beverage of sour milk, which is particularly refreshing at the time of the burning summer heat. The Turkomans make yogurt of sheep's milk, whilst the Kirghiz ferment a similar drink known as kumyss from mare's milk. The reason for this is that the Turkomans, who

7 [The Kara Kirghiz and the Turkomian -- Analyst]

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A Kirghiz woman on horse-back. Her smock-like dress is lavishly patterned with flowers, and she is wearing a headdress made of narrow strips of cloth.

234 sometimes remain for considerable periods in one place, possess large flocks of sheep, whereas the Kirghiz, as the more pronounced nomads, use the milk of their horses.

291 In their dress, too, the Kirghiz have retained a more archaic stage of civilization than the Turkomans. According to the report of the scientist Peter Simon Pallas, who explored

291 the steppes of Central Asia at the command of the Empress Catherine of Russia during the second half of the eighteenth century, the nomad Turkic peoples at one time did not make their clothing of textile materials, but rather of leather prepared from horses' hides. This was the only material strong enough to withstand the ravages of the sandstorms and blizzards which sweep across the vast steppes. In the dress of the Kirghiz Kasaks this tradition still survives. Over their cotton trousers they wear others of leather, which are of very loose cut. The upper part of the body is covered with a coarse shirt, over which the wide, long-sleeved coat, known throughout Central Asia as the chalat, is worn. The chalats of the nomads are often thickly padded and quilted, and are, therefore, very warm. In former times they, too, were made of leather, and in very rare cases they still are. As a protection against cold winter weather coats of sheep or wolf skin are also worn.

Among the Kirghiz the types ot headgear are particularly numerous, the traditional ones also being of leather. In the North a species of helmet is worn; it has four flaps which are let down in such a manner as to cover the face almost completely when a snowstorm is raging. Such helmets are made of strong leather, and are usually red in colour. The Kirghiz also wear high fur caps, with the hair to the inside. Only the turned-up flaps show a strip of fur.

[287] A textile material which is particularly characteristic of the Mongol tribes of Northern Asia is felt (see ill. page 1460). The Kirghiz,

1 [See cat. 116, p 75.. Analyst]

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A bazaar in Turkmenistan. In the regions inhabited by nomads bazaars for the surrounding districts are held twice a week at certain places. The merchants are townsmen. On the right a Turkoman, in the background a Russian official.

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Kirghiz men and women in their characteristic dress. Note the padded clothing and felt hats.

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291 particularly those of Turkestan proper, wear conical felt hats, the slashed brims of which are turned up. This type of headgear is demonstrably of great age. Indian miniatures of the time of the first Mogul emperors, i. e. the sixteenth century, show that such conical hats were frequently worn by the soldiers of those rulers. As the Mogul dynasty, and a great proportion of the armies with whose help it was founded, came from Turkestan, it is probable that the type of hat described above also originated there.

291 Belts and bags are also of leather. In one of these bags, which are very strongly made,
281 the Kirghiz carries his tea-making utensils. The pouches are usually bound or studded with metal, not only by way of decoration, but also to increase their strength. R. Karutz, who lived for a long time among the Kirghiz of the Caspian Sea, and who wrote at the beginning of the present century, gave a brief description of the treatment of hides. When scraped for dressing as leather, they are treated with a paste consisting of the boiled ashes of grasses which grow on the steppes. Hides which are to retain their hair are covered for a week with a paste of flour and sour milk. Pallas, too, was familiar with this method of treatment. Vámbéry described how a skin which was to be used for carrying water was salted.

291 The dress of Kirghiz women differs from that of the men in so far as the usually patterned outer garment is smock-like in cut and reaches to the ground in accordance with the custom in many Islamic countries. In addition they wear trousers which, like those of the men

291 are thrust into long boots. Over the chalat-like coat another one of fur is worn during the cold season. The high white headdress characteristic of the Kirghiz women consists of narrow lengths of cloth which are wrapped round head and chin in such a manner as to leave only the face uncovered. Among the women of Eastern Turkestan this headdress is very bulky. Young girls wear headdresses of [302] red instead of white cloth. Their manner of arranging their hair is also different. Married women plait their hair into two thick braids, whereas girls wear theirs in innumerable small plaits. Both women and girls intertwine the strands with strips of leather to make the braids appear longer and thicker; the ends are decorated with silver coins. Like other nomad women in Central Asia the Kirghiz women go unveiled.

Unlike the dress of the Kirghiz, that of the Turkomans is of cloth, a fact which in itself shows that they belong to a different civilization. The principal items of men's dress are a cotton shirt, which in the East is worn like a blouse or smock, cotton trousers, and a chalat. Chalats are usually dark red, a colour for which the Turkoman shows great preference. Whereas in the southern Turkoman regions chalats reach almost to the ground, in the North they are scarcely longer than the beshmet of the Tartars. As leg-coverings the Turkomans wear woollen stockings and sometimes light boots, but always heelless shoes of slipper-like character, which can easily be removed before entering a tent. The use of this kind of footwear shows that the Turko-

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Tekke Turkomans with the karakalpak caps which form their typical headdress.

291 mans have had contact with municipal civilization. The most distinctive feature of their dress is the high lambskin cap, which is not even discarded when summer is at its hottest. It is usually worn over a kind of skull-cap. The high-crowned fur caps impart to the tall, well-built Turkomans a striking and exceedingly martial note. The tribes who roam the regions of Khiva wear caps which are lower and broader in shape than those of the others. Though both Turkomans and Kirghiz are Mohammedans, neither of the two tribes wear [793] turbans with the exception of the mollahs, teachers of law and religion, who, however, mainly occupy themselves with foretelling the future and writing amulets.

The dress of the Turkoman women, like that of the men, seems expressly designed to make their tall, slender figures appear even taller. They wear long, loose gowns of brilliant red, reaching to the ground, and a high head-band resembling a cap, from which a ribbon hangs down at the back over the wearer's 301 neck. The women are very fond of ornaments, particularly those of the wealthy Tekke Turkomans who inhabit the oasis of Merv. They wear bracelets and anklets, breast ornaments of silver coins, and each of their numerous plaits ends in a small silver tassel. Nose-rings are worn by the women of the Şalor tribe only. Even the small helmet-like caps of the children end in a high silver point.

286 The most valuable textile material which the Turkomans and Kirghiz use, is that which their herds provide. A camel yields twenty or thirty pounds of wool, which is simply plucked out when the animals shed their winter coats; only neck, throat, and chin have to be shorn. Goats yield two to three pounds of wool once a year, sheep are shorn twice a year, the winter wool amounting to about 10 lbs, the summer crop to about 3 lbs.

286 Wool which is designed for weaving is first carded by the women by means of a comb-like instrument, and is then spun by hand, the spindle being rolled rapidly along the spinner's thigh, a method also common in India. The spindle used by the Turkoman women has a whorl attached to its upper end, that of the Kirghiz women has the whorl at the lower end. The spun thread is braided into cords, or woven into belts, ribbons or broad bands, and made into horses' harness. As everywhere in East and West Turkestan narrow, patterned ribbons are made by board-weaving. At this task two women work simultaneously, one of them turning the boards, the other passing the threads through the shed.

The two most interesting textile techniques of the nomads of Turkestan are without doubt the felting of unspun wool and the manufacture of textiles in the manner of carpet knotting. Both of these are discussed in the following article.1

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1[cat. 116, pp. 65-81--Analyst]

000 **Felted and Knotted Fabrics in Turkestan** *By A. Laix*

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Felted and Knotted Fabrics in Turkestan

287 Whereas settled peoples usually prefer stable and rigid materials for building their houses, nomads require a material which is light and unbreakable, which can easily be loaded on to the backs of their camels or other beasts of burden, and thus transported from place to place. For that reason nomads tend to develop textile techniques of distinctive character. It is in this respect that the fundamental difference between Kirghiz and Turkomans finds its most notable expression. The Kirghiz, who prefers stout, serviceable, and plain materials, makes use of felt manufactured by a most primitive method, whereas the Turkomans have adopted the same complicated technique of knotting which is used in the making of pile carpets, and which permits of such rich and varied effects.

In this respect as in many others the Kirghiz perpetuate an ancient technique of the Mongol nomads of Inner Asia. Fabrics of felt with elaborate appliqué patterns have been found in the tombs of Noin Ula in Mongolia, which date from about the beginning of the Christian era (see Ciba Review No. 37, p. 1322).

Felt is made of wool, usually of the summer wool of lambs born the same year. The process of converting loose wool into a thick, strong,

287 set at the same time pliable material consists of several stages. First of all the wool is spread out on the ground in a thick layer, where it is vigorously beaten with rods, a task performed by women and girls. It is then placed on a straw mat, also in an even layer, and sprayed with hot water in order to make it pliable. After that the mass is rolled up in the mat, and this roll is moved to and fro for hours until the wool has become felted. In Eastern Turkestan the Kirghiz make their yak oxen drag the roll back and forward. The felt is of the same colour as the natural wool, that is to say, white, brown, or fawn. White felt is regarded as the
[531] best of all. Patterned rugs are made by cutting out pieces of felt of contrasting colours, and arranging them on the layer of wool as desired. They are then stamped and pressed in until the whole mass becomes firmly felted together. In Western Turkestan the Kirghiz prefer angular geometrical patterns, in Eastern Turkestan undulating ribbon-like lines are more usual (see ill. p. 1460).

342 The felt made in the manner described above is so strong that the Kirghiz and other nomad peoples of Asia use it as a material for making tents; these are called alajak by the Kirghiz, kibitka in Russian, and yurt in Turk-

[See p. 75 -- Analyst]

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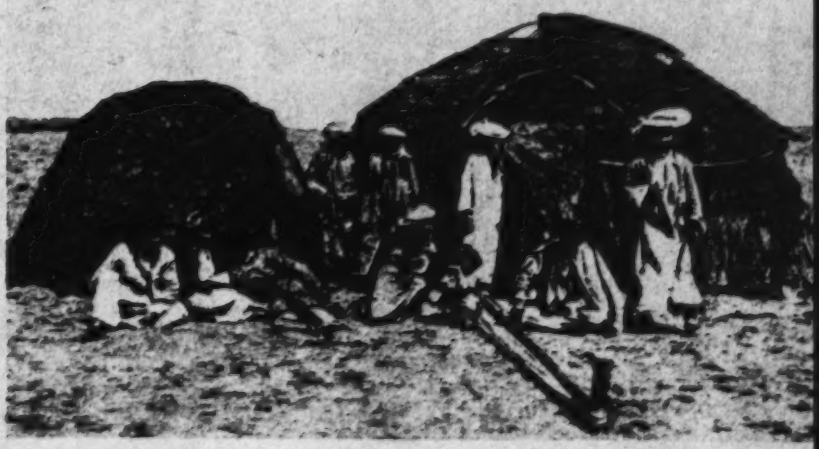
342 *Kirghiz tents. The tent on the right shows part of the wicker framework of the roof.*



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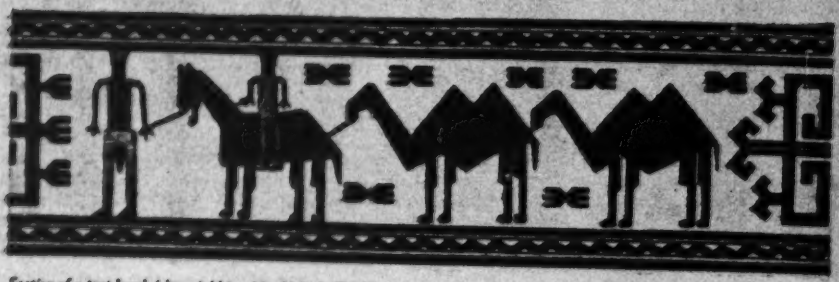

Section of a tent band (dasr-i-khirgah) which the Turkomans wrap round their tents. The pattern shows a caravan executed in the knot-technique.

342 ish. The Kirghiz tent may be described as a portable house (see ill. p. 1457). The frame consists of three parts, the walls, which are made of trellissed laths that can easily be folded up, the roof-frame, and a ring to which wall-frame and roof-frame are secured. The whole structure can be taken to pieces in a very short time, transported by a camel to a fresh pasture, and re-erected without great difficulty. After the framework has been set up, it is first surrounded by mats made of reeds, which bear a pattern formed by wrapping coloured threads round the stalks. These bold patterns with their angular geometrical figures are visible from afar. According to the time of the year the roof or the whole kibitka is covered with felt, which is tied down by means of cords. Against the burning heat of summer as well as the icy winter blizzards the felt kibitka affords the best protection imaginable.

287 531 Tents of similar kind are used by the Turkoman nomads. Unlike those of the Kirghiz, where the materials consist mainly of felt and leather, the Turkoman tents are characterized by the predominance of fabrics worked according to the technique of carpet-knotting.

[184] The perfection of this technique and the great variety of articles produced demonstrate the advanced stage of Turkoman civilization as compared with that of the Kirghiz. The knot-technique gives to the tent as well as to articles of daily use an artistic character which in no way impairs the mobility of the household.

Most of the rectangular Turkoman rugs were hung in the opening of the tents, where they served as substitutes for doors. None of the older pieces are larger than the moderately wide tent-openings. Some Turkoman tribes fixed a specially decorative piece, also worked in the knot-technique, above the entrance. The

7 [See p 67 -- Analyst]

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287 finest examples of this kind are those made by
531 the Yomuds; they are pentagonal in shape, and are ornamented with long black fringes. From the point of view of ethnology the most interesting fabric of this kind is a strip about forty or forty-five feet long and not more than about fourteen inches wide. Such strips are called daur-i-khirgah, and are passed right round the tent. They are covered with pictorial scenes or patterns made up of conventionalized landscapes or trees, all worked on a white ground according to the knot-technique. The figural scenes show caravans on the march, laden and grazing camels, horsemen, and other scenes from the daily life of the Turkomans. It is possible that certain events from the history of the tribe or clan are represented there. Religious or magic elements may also be discerned in these friezes. Essentially similar figures are found among primitive or semi-civilized peoples all over the world, executed in the style predominant in the respective areas.

531 In the tent of the Turkomans, as in the
352 dwellings of all Islamic peoples, the floor-carpet is one of the most important items. It is very likely that the Turkomans made no distinction between ordinary rugs and prayer mats, as their carpets had no pictorial patterns, and did not, therefore, run counter to Islamic law. One very common type of rug, patterned, strangely enough, with almost cruciform figures and claw-shaped ornaments interspersed with them, certainly served both as a floor-covering and a prayer-mat. Pillows and cushions on which the Turkoman rests his arms when seated are never made in knot-technique, but always covered with cloth.

415 The fronts of the various bags and pouches which the Turkomans use as receptacles for everything, even for butter and cheese, are al-

415 ways knotted like carpets (see ill. p. 1461). Of these there are three principal kinds, the juval, a large camel-bag about five feet long and three feet wide, the somewhat smaller torba, and the karjin, which is carried on donkey-back. Whereas the juval and the torba, which are slung on either side of the camel, are always made in pairs, the karjin is a double pouch which is flung over the donkey's back, so that a bag hangs down on either side. These various receptacles, which take the place of cupboards or boxes, and which are used both on the march and in camp, may justly be described as textile furniture, no less so than the floor-carpet which serves the Islamic peoples both as a 531 seat and as a bed. Turkoman carpets are 287 distinguished from all others by their simple 186 but vigorous beauty. All their patterns are geometrical, pictorial designs do not occur. 352 The elements of the patterns are grouped in straight lines and at angles. Curves and circles are entirely foreign to the Turkoman style. Red, the favourite colour for women's dress, is also predominant in the carpets. All other colours are no more than accessories to red, the shade of which varies from deep purple to scarlet.

This uniformity is not only the result of a peculiar sense of style, but is also to be ex-

[cat. 116, p. 72 -- Analyst]

The characteristic design preferred by the Salor Turkomans for their textile fabrics.

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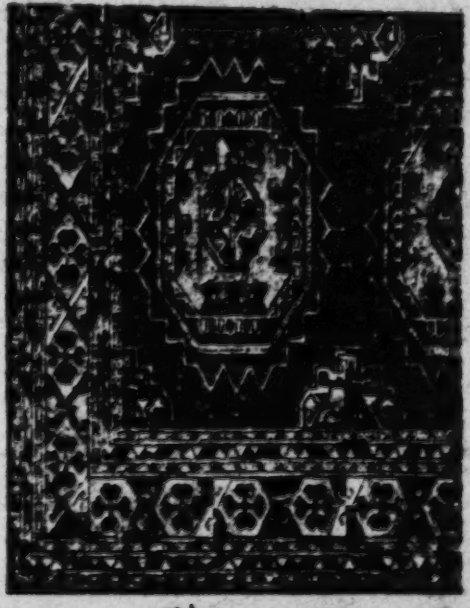

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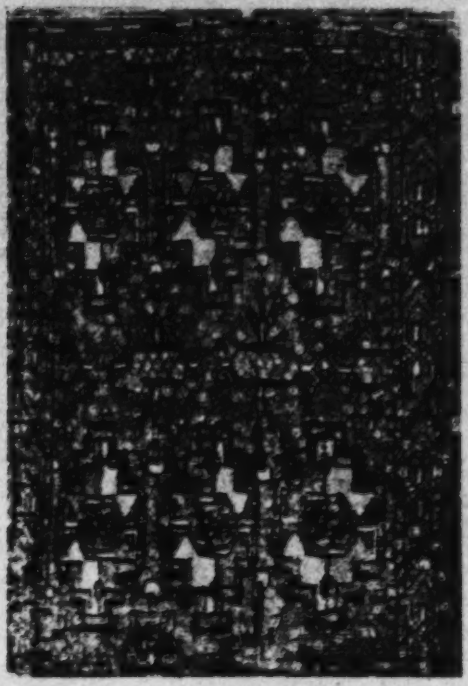

The jagged octagon, the figure found on all knotted work of the Tekke Turkomans.

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186 plained by the strongly developed organization of the Turkoman peoples. It is based on a long tradition which is strictly observed. There are only a limited number of patterns for knotted work, each of which is the property and the distinctive badge of a certain tribe. The scope for variation is very limited, and deliberate artistic innovations do not occur. The probable reason for this is the fact that the Turkomans take a pride in proclaiming their membership of a certain tribe from afar, by the patterns of their camel-pouches when on the march, and by those of their tent-flaps when in camp. In principle this custom is not unlike that of the Scottish Highlanders to proclaim to which clan they belong by displaying its tartan in kilt and plaid.

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352 In Europe Turkoman carpets—and the fronts of the camel-bags, which are sold separately as rugs—usually go under the name of Bokhara, though not one of them was ever knotted there. In Bokhara a variation of a Persian design was used for ornamenting carpets. The name for Turkoman carpets current in the Indian carpet-trade indicates the region of Merv as their place of origin. That is correct

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Felix U-5 (no date)1941 RL1 Turkestan RL1

in so far as the best known kinds are made by the women of the Tekke Turkomans, whose pastures are in the Merv area. Incidentally, all Turkoman carpets are made exclusively by women. Typical of the rugs of Merv is an octagonal star which is checkered red and white; the octagon is divided into four parts, each of which is in a colour contrasting to that of the adjacent part. The figures which fill the octagon are very simple and severely geometrical in style. The octagons are dispersed over the surface in even rows (see ill. p. 1459). The rugs of the Tekkes found their way to the West in large quantities; they are very popular, and have often been imitated.

The women of the Saryk tribe, which lives southward from Merv to the Afghan frontier, also use octagons as patterns, and arrange them in a manner similar to that of the Tekke rugs. There is, however, a difference in so far as the edges of these figures are not jagged. The rugs made in the southernmost part of this area, known as Punjdeh (five towns), have a style of their own. They avoid red altogether, and are distinguished by a very finely graded scale of colours, in which brown and black predominate, yellow and white being used very sparingly. These dark colours form a marked contrast to the brilliant tints of all other Turkoman rugs. They correspond to the natural colour of the wool or hair used in making all Turkoman rugs. And even though these colours are often obtained artificially by dyeing, the origin of the colour scheme is doubt-

7 [See p. 72 - Analyst]

287 less to be sought in the use of undyed wool.
531 The western neighbours of the Saryks are the
352 Salors. They, too, use the octagon as the sole ornament of their knotted rugs; it is filled with hook-shaped figures on an undivided ground of even red (see ill. page 1439).

Of entirely different pattern are the rugs of the northernmost Turkoman tribe, the Yomuds. They prefer scalloped figures and rows of hooks. Instead of octagons, lozenges form the ground of their rugs (see ill. page 1461).

In addition to these principal motives a number of minor ones are used, none of which are, however, of importance for the distinction of the various kinds of Turkoman rugs. Attempts have been made on more than one occasion to put some symbolic interpretation on these figures. That may be justified to a certain extent, but there can be no doubt that for some centuries at least the Turkomans have been as unconscious of the symbolic significance of these elements of designs as the Persian carpet-knotters are of that of the Buddhist symbols which they use as decorative elements. The intellectual and religious life of the early Turk peoples is far too little known to permit of anything more than surmise in this respect. Moreover, Turkestan has in the last few centuries been less accessible to foreigners that in Marco Polo's day.

287 The Turkoman rugs of the best period are so closely knotted that they must from a technical point of view be classed among the best Oriental carpets. Really good rugs

1 [see cat. 116, p. 71 -- Analyst]
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2 [see cat. 116, p. 78 -- Analyst]

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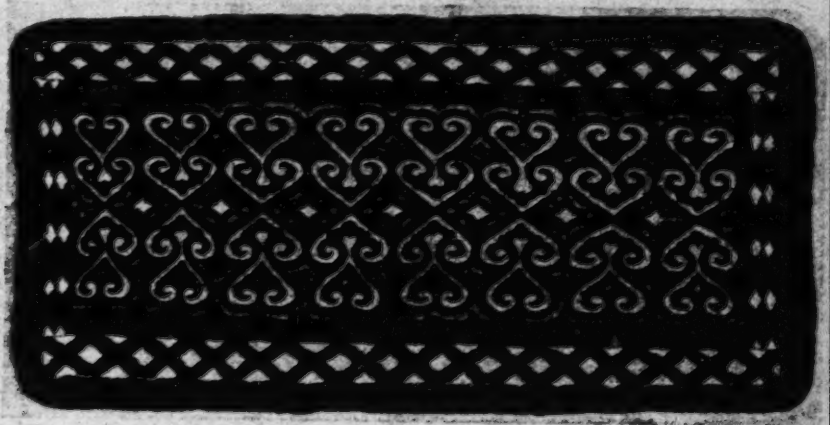
Felt rug from Eastern Turkestan with the rounded ornament: popular in that area.



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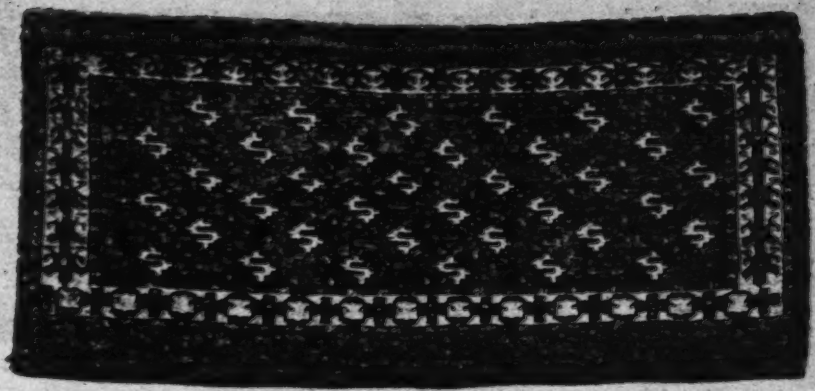

A "torba" or small camel-bag as used by the Turkomans. An early example, the pattern of which is knotted. Privately owned. New York.

4:Leix U-5 (no date)1941 RL1 Turkestan RL1

287 number from 420 to 450 knots to the square inch, and some times even more than that. The knot is usually the Persian Sennah knot; the Turkish Ghiordes knot occurs in exceptional cases only (cf. Ciba Review No. 15). The material used is the wool of camels, sheep, and goats. The strong knee-hair of the camel serves as material for the warp-threads. For the knot-thread the soft under-wool which goats and camels grow in the cold season is used. Unlike the camels of other Oriental countries the heavy beasts of burden in Turkestan, the so-called Bactrian camels, have an exceedingly thick coat of hair, which covers their bodies in thick tufts during the winter months. Cotton is never used in the making of Turkoman rugs, and silk only very rarely, usually in making small knotted bags from the region of Merv and Punjdeh, and then only for a few details of the pattern.

The treatment of the wool used in knotting rugs has been brought to great perfection in the course of a long tradition. Washing, which is done in running water, is of great importance. It is very difficult to remove all the grease from the fibre, and if that is not done there is danger of maggots finding their way into the pile and destroying it.

386 The same care and skill are devoted to the dyeing of the wool. As elsewhere in the East the important red dye was extracted from the root of the madder-plant (known in the vernacular as rujan) or from the kermes shield-louse. Madder grew wild throughout Turkestan, and

4:Leix U-5 (no date)1941 RL1 Turkestan RL1

386 was also cultivated. Blue was achieved by means of indigo, which had to be brought from India, and for that reason it is rarely found in Turkoman rugs. Black was usually extracted from the gall-nuts of the pistachio (known as busgunch) and from pomegranate skins. Sometimes mate-

287 *Pattern in knot-technique as used by the Yomud Turkomans. Lozenges and rows of hooks are distributed over the background.*

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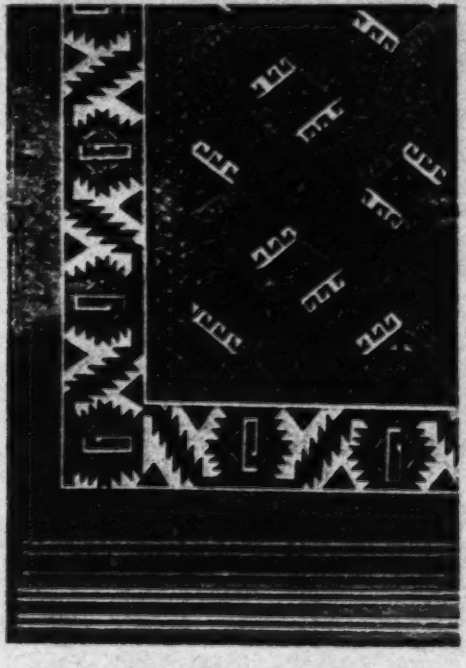

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Selling cane for the manufacture of mats in a village near Bukhara. These mats form part of the tent walls.

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386 rials such as pyrites were used, which had the effect of corroding the wool, so that the black parts of many otherwise good rugs give the impression of having been eaten away. In spite of the limited selection of colours the shades and the number of combinations are surprisingly 287 varied. The Turkomans are good observers, and were not slow in making use of the fact 531 that the colours varied with the time of the year at which the plants were gathered, or with the length of time during which they were allowed to boil, to ferment, or to be exposed to the rays of the sun. For that reason the simplicity which characterizes these rugs is never monotonous. Both technically and artistically they are the perfect expression of that form of life which ethnologists describe as nomadic. They fulfil all the requirements of daily use, and the patterns are designed and perpetuated by skilled workers of a tribe, whose members all live under precisely the same geographical and social conditions.

287 These connections between the knotting technique and nomad life are so striking that 352 one feels tempted to regard the craft as an invention of wandering tribes. For the town-dwellers of Persia and India, of Egypt and Asia Minor, who developed the craft of carpet-knotting into an art, the necessity to use such light and easily transportable »textile furniture« is not nearly so great, and it is but natural that they should have adopted the

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352 technique primarily for the making of floor-coverings. The fact that Sir Aurel Stein discovered fragments of pile rugs during his excavations of the stations along the ancient silk road through Eastern Turkestan, distinctly points to the origin of the technique among the nomads of Central Asia. Apart from that, nothing certain is known of the origin and development of the different kinds of Turkoman rugs. Some examples may date back to the early eighteenth century. That is, however, no more than surmise, probable though
287 it may be. The one established fact is that all
178 the good examples of the craft now in existence must have been made before the seventies of the last century, that is to say, before the conquest of the country by the Russians. The reason for this is the complete transformation of the life of the Turkoman tribes under Russian rule. As the Russians put an end to the activities of the Turkomans as caravan robbers and slave traders, they were obliged to cast about for some other means of livelihood. From that time on the burden of providing a substitute for the gains formerly achieved by robbery fell to the women, whose skill in carpet-knotting was exploited. Carpets of huge size were made for the palaces of Russian nobles and generals. In time the desire to execute these profitable orders as speedily as possible led to a decline in the great care formerly exercised in the making of Turkoman rugs.

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Embroidery in Turkestan

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In every moderately well-to-do house in Bokhara embroidered cloths serve as wall-coverings, the interesting patterns and brilliant colours of which immediately attract the visitor's eye. A good example of wall-coverings of this type is seen in the picture of a married couple of Bokhara, which was reproduced in Ciba Review No. 10, page 332. What makes them so attractive is the simplicity of the pattern, which, however, on closer inspection proves to be richer than at first supposed. It is embroidered on a background of unbleached cotton, which not only remains visible between the figures, but which is intended to heighten the effect of the whole.

The same artistic taste is revealed in the distribution of the pattern itself. The principal forms are usually large circular flowers dispersed over the surface of the cloth with unfailing sense of rhythm. Between them are smaller floral elements, conventionalized carnations, tulips, and irises, accompanied by twigs and garlands. In spite of its stylized character, the pattern is very vivid in its effect, an effect which owes a great deal to the brightness of the colours. The principal colour is a rich red, supplemented by many other shades of the same colour, and by green, purple, and black.

These susanis as they are called are not only made at Bokhara, but also at Samarkand, Karshi, and in other towns of Turkestan, though not always with the same discriminating artistic taste. They do not serve as wall-coverings only. Narrow strips are used to frame doorways, other pieces serve as prayer-mats, and it

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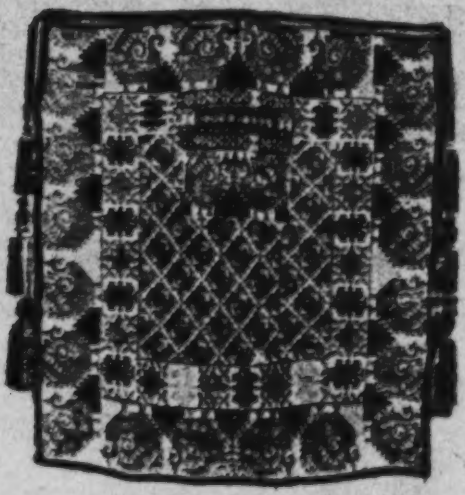

Embroidered wall-hanging of the mountain Tajiks. The figures seen in the pattern are conventionalized peacocks, and probably continue an ancient Persian tradition.

is not regarded as improper to cover the biers on which the dead are borne to rest with these colourful textiles.

These embroideries form part of a larger group which has not yet received the study it deserves. In Western Turkestan alone there are two other kinds in addition to the susanis, each of these is the heritage of a different tribe. The Turkomans made ornaments for their tents in the same technique as that of the susanis. Pentagonal pieces were embroidered by the Salors as decorations for tent-openings,

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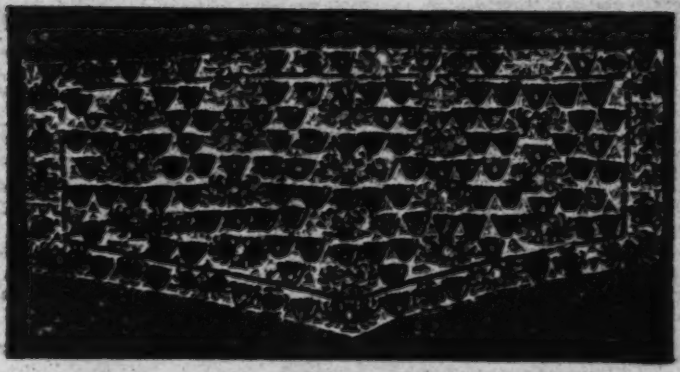

Embroidered tent ornament of the Salors which is hung above the tent-opening. The figures of the pattern are stylized flowers.

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very much like those which they knotted. It is possible that they were used for the summer tents (see ill. page 1464). As is the case with all nomad work of this kind, the patterns are severely stylized. There is, however, no doubt that they are derived from floral patterns, and that the embroideries of the Salors are to be regarded as a variety of the susanis.

Hangings in the houses of the Tajiks (see ill. page 1464), who inhabit the mountainous regions to the south-east of Bokhara, show patterns of a very different character. Isolated as they are in a remote area, the Tajiks have retained many characteristics of an archaic civilization (confer page 1441). Among these must be numbered the embroidered fabrics made public by Count Bobrinskoi forty years ago. The principal elements in their patterns are birds arranged in pairs and in rows. They are so severely stylized that only the tufts on their heads permit of them being identified as peacocks. They represent an ancient formal tradition of the Orient, which goes back to the pre-Islamic period, and which can be traced without interruption down to the present day. In

[See p. 84-- Analyst]
[See p. 83-- Analyst]
[See p. 23-- Analyst]

531 [353] the remote mountain districts of Central Asia the forms have been handed down so carefully that the figure of the bird has retained traces of medieval stylization.

Embroideries discovered by Le Coq in sparsely populated districts of Eastern Turkestan are in technique and design frequently almost identical with the susanis of Bokhara. They show the same stylized flower-patterns in the same combination of colours, usually as decorations of women's trousers (tambal). It may, therefore, be assumed that the style of the susanis is characteristic of the Turkic peoples of Central Asia.

More than twenty years ago Le Coq reported that such embroidery was no longer being made in Eastern Turkestan. The examples that he saw had been made by the mothers of 656 the generation then living. In Western Turkestan the tradition not only exists to this day, 562 but the government has set up special workshops where the women embroider susanis. This is part of the policy by means of which the state seeks to draw women out of the secluded life of the harem.